

VZCZCXRO0907
OO RUEHAG RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHRL #1692 3541344
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 191344Z DEC 08
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2894
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHSK/AMEMBASSY MINSK IMMEDIATE 0311

C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 001692

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/19/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EU](#) [SW](#) [GM](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: GERMANY: MIXED VIEWS OF THE NEW EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

REF: A. BERLIN 01567
[1](#)B. STOCKHOLM 00792
[1](#)C. WARSAW 01378

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Jeffrey Rathke for reasons:
1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. German contacts support the EU's new Eastern Partnership (EP) in part because it offers increased cooperation with eastern neighbors while falling short of moving toward membership and in part because it responds to Russian aggression in Georgia by bringing the eastern neighbors closer to the west. However, contacts caution that direct opposition to Russia was not an option. Finally, German officials remain uncertain whether Belarus would participate in the EP, but conceded that participation is likely.

A Delicate But Strong Response to Russia

[1](#)2. (C) MFA Deputy Division Head for Central Europe Frank Hartmann told poloff that Foreign Minister Steinmeier wanted to include Russia somehow in the EP so as to avoid alienating Moscow. However, Hartmann conceded that German support for the Swedish-Polish proposal only coalesced after the Russian invasion in Georgia. COMMENT: This corroborates with Chancellery contacts last month who emphasized that Germany only supported the resolution as a punishment to Russia (Ref A). Although officials appeared willing to talk tough against Russia in regards to the EP, the same contacts also had pushed for the return of the EU's Partnership and Cooperation Agreement negotiations with Russia before strongly supporting the EP (see Ref B). END COMMENT.

EP Supporting Not Replacing the ENP

[1](#)3. (C) Chancellery and MFA contacts agreed that EP is a "tool" to support the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) rather than replacing ENP, which the Germans launched during their EU presidency last year. According to Hartmann, Neighborhood Policy dominates EU external relations, with two branches: the east and the south. While countries such as "France and Italy may focus on the Mediterranean aspect," the important branch for Germany is the east. Moreover, Hartmann argued that the EP will strengthen the ENP. Chancellery Desk Officer for the Caucasus and Central Asia Agapi Nehring was more dismissive of the EP, questioning whether it would offer any added value beyond ENP.

[1](#)4. (C) Hartmann also voiced a note of caution because the allotted 350 million Euros for the EP is for all six potential countries over the next seven years. MFA Deputy Division Head Henning Simon elaborated that the German financial situation does not lend itself to increasing funds, contrary to Polish hopes (see Ref C). Moreover, Hartmann and Nehring agreed that the EP in no way represents the promise of or even the "potential of future membership." Simon opined that perhaps some countries--most likely Ukraine--would be ready to join after a decade or so. Contacts agreed that the Poles and Swedes have an "overly

optimistic" take on how quickly the six countries will be ready for visa free travel or a free trade agreement.

Whether Five or Six Will Be in the EP

15. (C) Chancellery and MFA contacts appear to be on the same page in regards to whether Belarus will be included in the EP when the incoming Czech EU presidency launches the EP at the Spring Summit. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine will be invited, and including Belarus is likely but "not certain at this point." Hartmann said that for Belarus to be invited, the country needed to enact additional reforms, especially in regards to media restrictions, and to avoid "egregious acts," such as arresting more political opponents. Overall, Hartmann and Chancellery EU Relations Division Head Petra Sigmund focused on the opportunity to move Belarus away from Russia. Simon also noted that Belarus appeared more willing to turn to the EU for help after Russia offered a loan "with too many stipulations," and now looked to the EU for support during the financial crisis. Simon was uncertain of how the EU viewed the loan request.
Koenig